

Lord's Day 3/22/2026

Adult Sunday School

Last week we reviewed in some detail the sacraments generally, and specifically the Lord's Supper.

I trust that the time spent was edifying and helpful. This week we will examine the questions in the WLC that deal with how we ought to comport ourselves before, during, and after the observances of the sacrament.

Our first question for examination this morning is 171

*Q. How are they that receive the sacrament of the Lord's Supper to prepare themselves before they come to it?*

*A. They that receive the sacrament of the Lord's Supper are, before they come, to prepare themselves thereunto, by examining themselves of their being in Christ, of their sins and wants, of the truth and measure of their knowledge, faith, repentance, love to God and the brethren, charity to all men, forgiving those that have done them wrong, of their desires after Christ, and of their new obedience, and by renewing the exercise of these graces, by serious meditation, and fervent prayer.*

Once again, we have a pretty enormous pile of words to deal with here! Let's try to break it down.

Fundamentally, the idea here is that we have a duty of preparation in coming to the Lord's Supper. So, wherein does it consist?

This basically all boils down to examination:

Of their being in Christ. – what does that mean?

Of their sins and wants. – what is meant by “want” in this context?

Of the truth and knowledge of their:

Faith

Repentance

Love to God & the brethren

Charity to all men

Forgiveness for wrongs suffered

Desires after Christ

Of our renewed obedience

But there also is an element of resolution:

Renewal of *all* of these graces by: serious meditation & prayer

So... I will ask the question of the elephant in the room... Do we take our observance, the preparation thereunto, of the Lord's Supper with this kind of sobriety?

Second question: Why? Why do our Divines exhort us to such lofty ambitions? What is the cost/benefit analysis here? Seems like this might require a good deal of our time. Is it necessary/worth it? Should we refrain if we don't feel that we have done this adequately?

Well... As usual, the authors of our catechism have preempted our questions by asking the next question. 172

*Q. May he who doubteth of his being in Christ, or of his due preparation, come to the Lord's Supper? (emphasis mine)*

*A. One who doubteth of his being in Christ, or of his due preparation to the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, may have a true interest in Christ, though he be not yet assured thereof; and in God's account hath it, **if he be duly affected with the apprehension of the want of it, and unfeignedly desired to be found in Christ**, and to depart from iniquity (because promises are made and this sacrament is appointed, for the relief even of weak and doubting Christians) he is to bewail his unbelief, and labor to have his doubts resolved; and so doing, he may and ought to come to the Lord's Supper; that he may be further strengthened. (emphasis mine)*

What is the main point of the Q&A?

Jumping ahead to Q. 174

*Q. What is required of them that receive the sacrament of the Lord's Supper in the time of the administration of it?*

*A. It is required of them that receive the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, that, during the time of the administration of it, with all holy reverence and attention they wait upon God in that ordinance, diligently observe the sacramental elements and actions, heedfully discern the Lord's body, and affectionately meditate on his death and sufferings, and thereby stir up themselves to a vigorous exercise of their graces; in judging themselves, and sorrowing for sin, in earnest hungering and thirsting after Christ, feeding on Him by faith, receiving of His fulness, trusting in His merits, rejoicing in His love, giving thanks for His grace; in renewing of their covenant with God, and love to all the saints.*

So, in other words, the reception of the sacrament is not a spectator sport, or a passive event, but one on which we have much duty and obligation to perform!

In the first place, with all holy reverence and attention we are to:

Wait upon God

Diligently observe the sacramental elements and actions

Heedfully discern the Lord's body

And, affectionately meditate on His death and sufferings

To the end that we stir up ourselves to a vigorous exercise of their graces, in:

Judging ourselves

Sorrowing for sin

Hungering and thirsting after Christ

Feeding on Him by faith

Receiving of His fulness

Trusting in His merits

Rejoicing in His love

Giving thanks for His grace

Renewing our covenant to God and our love to the saints

That seems like a lot to cram into the few minutes that is taken up in the administration of the sacrament. But, if we train our mind and heart, ahead of time by preparation, we will be primed to be thinking on these things during the administration.

So, service ends, and we go home. Game over, right? No.

175

*Q. What is the duty of Christians, after they have received the sacrament of the Lord's Supper?*

*A. The duty of Christians, after they have received the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, is seriously to consider how they have behaved themselves therein, and with what success; if they find quickening and comfort, to bless God for it, beg the continuance of it, watch against relapses, fulfill their vows, and encourage themselves to a frequent attendance on that ordinance: but if they find no present benefit, more exactly to review their preparation to, and carriage at, the sacrament; in both which, if they can approve themselves to God and their own consciences, they are to wait for the fruit of it in due time: but, if they see they have failed in either, they are to be humbled, and to attend upon it afterwards with more care and diligence.*

So, we have here a few categories. Our standards exhort us to serious consideration in how we conducted ourselves during the Lord's Supper, and if there was any benefit from it.

If we find that that we have a greater sense of the life of Christ in us and comfort to our souls, we are to rejoice, thanking God, asking him for those feeling senses of His goodness to continue, and for that to urge us on to greater obedience.

If, however, we find that we perceive no benefit from the sacrament, we are to keenly review our preparation for and conduct during the sacrament. If, in good conscience, we can say that we have fulfilled our obligation with reasonable care, then we are exhorted to patience. Contrariwise, if we find that we were remiss in either of those obligations, we humble ourselves before the Lord, and to renew our commitment to greater observance in the future.

Time permitting, I want us to consider one small item from 174 that might be unfamiliar to us: Sacramental actions. What are these?

Vos, in his commentary on the catechism, lists 6. 4 that were performed by our Lord, 2 performed by the disciples.

The first four being – taking the bread and the cup, giving thanks, breaking the bread, giving the bread and the cup to the disciples.

The second two being – taking the bread and the cup, eating the bread and drinking the wine.

These, he comments, portray the atonement of Christ and a sinner's receiving Him by Faith

If we have even more time: 173

*Q. May any who profess faith, and desire to come to the Lord's Supper, be kept from it?*

*A. Such as are found to be ignorant or scandalous, notwithstanding their profession of faith, and desire to come to the Lord's Supper, may and ought to be kept from that sacrament, by the power which Christ hath left in His church, until they receive instruction and manifest their reformation.*